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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/896,375	06/29/2001	Richard J.H. Wilson	STEINER 00.01	9550

7590

05/03/2004

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EXAMINER

SHERRER, CURTIS EDWARD

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1761

DATE MAILED: 05/03/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/896,375

Applicant(s)

WILSON ET AL.

Examiner

Curtis E. Sherrer, Esq.

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 10/20/03.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-27 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 1-16 and 23-27 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) 17-22 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restriction

This application contains claims drawn to an invention nonelected with traverse. A complete reply to the final rejection must include cancelation of nonelected claims or other appropriate action (37 CFR 1.144) See MPEP § 821.01.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 18, 20 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Again, Claim 22 is indefinite because the scope of the term “about” is unknown; claim 18 is indefinite because the scope of the terms “substantially” and “slightly” is unknown; claim 20 is indefinite because the scope of the phrase “room temperature” is unknown.

Applicants have supplied evidence concerning the voluminous number of U.S. patents that contain said terms in their claims. This evidence in and of itself is not persuasive, as the specifications or the prosecution history may well provide the metes and bounds of said terms. If said terms are not part of the inventive concept, they are also then not held to be indefinite.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 17-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maye *et al.* (U.S. Pat. No. 5,583,262) ("Maye").

Maye teaches that set forth in the last Office action. Applicants have amended the claims to require that first heating a concentrated solution of the claimed acids and then adding the concentrated aqueous alkali metal hydroxide solution to the heated acids. It would have been obvious to those of ordinary skill in the art to heat the acids before adding the alkali because selection of any order of performing process steps is *prima facie* obvious in the absence of new or unexpected results. *In re Burhans*, 154 F.2d 690, 69 USPQ 30 (CCPA 1946). Selection of any order of mixing ingredients is *prima facie* obvious. *In re Gibson*, 5 USPQ 230 (CCPA 1930).

Applicants argue that the claims are not obvious because the reference of Maye, wherein it is stated that the "reduced-isoalpha acids are then mixed with water and basified with potassium hydroxide and or potassium carbonate or the like to a pH above 5," is the pH of the solution before the addition of the salt solution. It is not clear what applicants' assertion is based on. The above passage clearly indicates that the pH will rise to above 5 after the addition of the basic salt solution.

Applicants also argue that Maye teaches steps not recited in the claims. The instant claims are broad, in that the preamble uses the phrase "comprising," which is open

ended and does not exclude other steps.

Applicants also state "the substitution of metal salts such as those that are used by Maye simply would not provide Applicants' claimed process." Applicants comment on Ex. 7 of Maye to argue this point. Applicants must analyze Maye's disclosure taking into account all the teachings within the four corners of the patent. No data was supplied to support this argument, but rather only opinion, and this is given little weight. Lastly, if applicants' process requires specific elements to be present for the claimed process to be operable, then they should appear in the independent claim.

Response to Arguments

Applicants' arguments filed 10/20/03 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. See responses provided above.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any

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extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Curtis E. Sherrer, Esq. whose telephone number is 571-272-1406. The examiner can normally be reached on Tuesday-Friday, 8AM-6:30PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Milton Cano can be reached on 571-272-1398. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Curtis E. Sherrer, Esq.
Primary Examiner
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